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29 Mar 95

MEMO FOR: ExDir/Comptroller

FROM: Director ORD

SUBJECT: Recent Interactions with NRC re Star Gate Review:  
Proposed Date for Final Conclusions

References:

Dear

1. During ORD's recent meeting with National Research Council (NRC) management, we were informed that on 16 May its governing board will formally consider the Agency's request to conduct an unclassified retrospective review of the Star Gate program. While we believe that approval is likely, it is not automatic; The NRC historically does not typically engage in studies for intelligence community, nor is the NRC is being tasked directly by Congress in this instance which would be more compelling. However, it is clear that the NRC is both interested and highly capable of performing the Star Gate review directed to CIA in the recent CDA. Furthermore, because of the controversial nature of this study, and in accordance with the NRC's careful and conservative procedures for review and publication, the likely date of final publication of its conclusions would be between February and May of 1996. While the NRC provides progress reports, it does not release interim reports relating to the study's probable conclusions.

2. ORD continues to believe that among the existing bodies of technical reviewers, only the NRC, the working arm of the National Academy of Sciences, has the current expertise and objectivity to provide a persuasive review of investigations relating to paranormal phenomena. More importantly, it is one of the few technical organizations having sufficient standing within Congress to impact the ultimate sponsorship of the Star Gate program, which appears at this point to be primarily Congressional. We cannot accomplish the restructuring of the Star Gate program in a logical or productive way without completing the NRC review.

3. D/ORD originally clarified the need for a Blue Ribbon Panel of Star Gate prior to program in his memo to the ExDir of [...] CIA submitted a formal response the CDA which was hand delivered to Congress 24 March. This response contained a Terms of Reference for ORD's management of the Star Gate program transfer specifying our choice of the NRC to conduct the Blue Ribbon Panel review. D/ORD subsequently met with

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Mr. Dick D'Amato (SAC) regarding the Terms of Reference and discussed the NRC's basic approach. It was stated at that meeting that the NRC would not conclude its review by 1 July, but that CIA itself would provide some type of interim progress report regarding the program evaluation. It was clear that D'Amato did not want to delay the program transfer, however, he approved of the NRC approach.

4. Star Gate has had several incarnations in various government agencies. Congress has proposed relocating and restructuring Star Gate three times in the last five years. Without a persuasive technical review, ORD can only speculate as to what the appropriate management strategy should be for the program. Therefore, we wish to inform you that we will proceed in engaging the NRC despite the fact it may take nearly one year for them to publish their final conclusions. We strongly believe that the value of having the NRC perform the twenty-year retrospective review outweighs the inconvenience of not restructuring the program until these results are available.